

all sin. Indeed, he became sin for us, that we might know complete forgiveness. ‘And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world... But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved... (Ephesians 2:1-2, 4-5). ‘For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life’ (John 3:16).

This is the glory of the Gospel of Christ. The Bible points us to the righteousness from God that comes through faith in Christ (Philippians 3:9). You can be saved from sin, not as a result of anything you can do, but through faith in Christ. ‘God demonstrates his love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us’ (Romans 5:8). Therefore, if you truly repent of your sins, turning away from your old life, and place your faith in Christ, you can be made right with God; you can know the joy of forgiveness and a new life in Christ. ‘If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness’ (1 John 1:9). ‘Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new’ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Jesus said to those who want to become his disciples: ‘Whoever desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?’ (Mark 8:34-37). As a Christian your outlook on life, including your sexual conduct, will be transformed. ‘Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will’ (Romans 12:2).

Dr ES Williams is an experienced public health doctor. He is married with five children and seven grandchildren. He has researched the issues of marriage, divorce and sex education from a Christian perspective. He is author of *The Great Divorce Controversy*, *Lessons in Depravity* and a number of booklets on sexual conduct.

Scripture quotations from the **Holy Bible**: NIV, ESV, AV and NKJ. Used by permission.

Published by **Belmont House Publishing**, 36 The Crescent, Belmont, Sutton, SM2 6BJ UK. This pamphlet may be photocopied and freely distributed.

Website: www.belmonthouse.co.uk

Sexual conduct: biblical advice for young people

Dr ES Williams

Sexual conduct: biblical advice for young people

We all have a moral framework that guides the way we live. Today some people believe that we are free to decide our own moral standards, to decide for ourselves what is right and wrong. The Christian, on the other hand, believes that God has revealed his moral standards in the Bible. And there is no doubt that our moral outlook has a big impact on the way we behave, and this is especially true when it comes to sexual conduct. Few young people understand that the Bible is the only sure guide to sexual conduct.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ set God's standard of behaviour. He summed up the moral law with the Golden Rule: 'In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets' (Matthew 7:12). Jesus emphasised the clear moral choice that all people face. He taught that there are two gates that lead on to the roadway of life – a narrow gate and a broad gate. He declared: 'Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it' (Matthew 7:13-14).

When this teaching is applied to sexual conduct, it becomes clear that all young people must make a choice between two ways. Many choose the broad, easy way. It is the road of permissiveness, based on the wisdom of the world, as portrayed by the glossy magazine, the latest TV soap opera, the condom advert and the advice of 'safer sex'. The broad way encourages young people to believe that they are free to decide their own standards of sexual behaviour, to do what they want, whatever seems to be right in their own eyes. The narrow way, based on God's moral standard, provides a clear distinction between right and wrong sexual conduct.

The broad way to destruction

While the broad way is easy and popular, the reality is that it leads to tragedy, as many young people know to their cost. It is common knowledge that sexual permissiveness is a major reason for the epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases among young people. The dreadful consequences of HIV/AIDS are plain for all to see. The Bible warns: 'The body is not meant for sexual immorality... Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body' (1 Corinthians 6:13, 18). Sexual sins are different from other sins in that they damage the body, and this is especially true for women. Unpleasant diseases like chlamydia and gonorrhoea play havoc with the female reproductive system for they

in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes, for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life. Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?' (Proverbs 6:25-27). You cannot play with sexual temptation; to do so shows a gross lack of judgement.

6. Dress modestly. Young women must not dress in a way that is designed to arouse lustful thoughts in men. A beautiful woman who shows no discretion is like a gold ring in a pig's snout (Proverbs 11:22). Proverbs warns men to beware of the seductive woman who dresses like a prostitute with crafty intent (7:10). With persuasive words she leads men astray, but her house is a highway to the grave. Remember that men lose respect for the easy, foolish woman who dresses like a tart.

The wise and the foolish

The wise are those who base their decisions, actions and life choices on the wisdom of God. They know that the biblical view of sexual conduct is right. They base their conduct on the solid rock of God's word. The wise young woman accepts with joy that her sexuality is a gift from God that is meant for marriage and motherhood. A wise young woman radiates the inner beauty of a modest spirit; she strives for sexual purity and practises chastity. With joy she follows the narrow way that leads to life. A wise young man reveals the inner strength of a chivalrous heart; he practises self-control and sexual purity. He treats women with honour and respect. He is faithful to his wife; he loves and protects his children.

The foolish are those who hear God's word but do not put it into practice. They make their own 'informed' decision about their sexual behaviour. They are deluded into believing that 'recreational' sex is fun. They are deceived by the promise of 'safer sex'. A foolish young woman has sex with men who say that they love her. She puts her faith in contraception. She hopes that the consequences of illicit sex can be avoided. She builds her house on sand. A foolish young man lacks self-control; he is a sexual predator who treats women as sex objects. When the storms of life come, as they surely will, the house built by the foolish young man and the foolish young woman crumbles. This is an eternal truth—sin has consequences, and sexual sin has serious physical consequences. The Bible issues this stern warning. 'Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. We reap what we sow. Those who sow to please the sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; those who sow to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life' (Galatians 6:7-8).

A new creation

The good news of the Christian Gospel is that it offers the hope of forgiveness and a new life in Christ. Those who have fallen short of God's standard and sinned sexually, as many have, can know complete forgiveness. There is no sin too vile, too bad, too shocking to be beyond the mercy of God. On the cross Christ paid the full price of sin,

Chivalry is an attitude that puts women first, while sexual permissiveness puts self-gratification first and women last. Chivalry treats women with respect as future wives and mothers, while the contraceptive mentality treats women as sexual objects. Chivalry brings the best out of women, for it encourages them to behave with modesty and chastity. Sexual permissiveness, the antithesis of chivalry and modesty, degrades manhood, devalues womanhood and destroys marriage.

Practical advice from Proverbs

The book of Proverbs teaches young people the great value of true wisdom. ‘Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for she (wisdom) is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold... She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed’ (Proverbs 3:13,14,18). So young person, ‘do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones’ (Proverbs 3:7,8). ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline’ (Proverbs 1:7). Here are practical guidelines to help you live in a way that is pleasing to God:

1. Listen to your parents’ advice. ‘Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching’ (Proverbs 1:8). ‘A wise son heeds his father’s instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke’ (13:1). Your parents are the ones who truly love you and have your best interests at heart. The fifth commandment to honour your father and mother makes it a duty to obey your parents. Seek their advice with regard to your conduct. ‘A fool spurns his father’s discipline’ (15:5).

2. Do not keep bad company. ‘My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them’ (Proverbs 1:10). Remember that bad company corrupts good morals. So do not be misled by the boasting and proud talk of the mockers, those who follow evil ways. ‘Do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths; for their feet rush into sin’ (Proverbs 1:15-16). Young man, keep from the wayward woman ‘for her house leads down to death’ (Proverbs 2:18). Young woman, keep away from the man who is full of lust, who seeks to use you to satisfy his sexual cravings.

3. Avoid bad language. Don’t think that it is clever or grown up to use foul language and cursing. ‘Keep corrupt talk far from your lips’ (Proverbs 4:24). ‘The mouth of a fool invites ruin’ (10;14). Sex talk invites impure thoughts, and inflames sexual cravings. You should avoid obscenity, foolish talk and coarse joking (Ephesians 5:4).

4. Keep your eyes pure. ‘Let your eyes look straight ahead’ (Proverbs 4:25). Jesus warned: ‘If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away’ (Matthew 5:29). Avoid dirty literature and pornographic images. The lust of the eyes inflames passions and leads to uncontrollable sexual temptations.

5. Avoid sexual temptation. Keep away from the immoral man or woman. Beware of sexual images or smooth sounding talk that entices you into wrongdoing. ‘Do not lust

are associated with chronic pelvic infection and infertility. When a young woman sins sexually, she sins against her own body, against her own womanhood.

Similarly, a young man who sins sexually sins against his own body, against his own manhood. Unpleasant diseases, like gonorrhoea, syphilis and genital herpes, can have long-term health effects. But worse, sexual immorality has serious spiritual consequences. The young man who deceives a girlfriend into sex with false promises of love is living a lie. He is treating the woman he claims to love as a sex object to satisfy his selfish sexual desires.

The book of Proverbs provides a graphic picture of sexual immorality. It describes a young man who lacks moral judgement and is quickly led astray by the smooth talk of a seductive woman. ‘All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter... Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death’ (Proverbs 7:22, 26-27). The Bible makes it clear that immorality leads to destruction. ‘For a man’s ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths. The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast. He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly’ (Proverbs 5:21-23).

So Jesus was right when he said that the broad way leads to destruction. While the broad way of sexual pleasure appears exciting, the long-term consequences are inevitable and dreadful. The truth is that sexual sin has profound spiritual, emotional and physical consequences—those who indulge in sexual immorality are showing a gross lack of judgement, for they are destroying themselves by their foolish conduct. Although it may take time, shame and disgrace are inevitable when the moral law of God is ignored. In the end, the message of ‘safer sex’ proves to be worthless, dishonest, and cruel. ‘There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death’ (Proverbs 14:12). Those on the broad way are like the tossing sea that cannot rest; its waters toss up mire and mud. ‘There is no peace’, says my God, ‘for the wicked’ (Isaiah 57:20-21).

True wisdom, which is found in God, gives meaning and purpose to life, and particularly to sex. Remember, the Bible – God’s word – is the only sure guide to sexual conduct.

The sexual nature of mankind

The Bible explains that the Lord God, who created the heavens and the earth, created the sexual nature of mankind. ‘So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them’ (Genesis 1:27). Here we see three important truths. First, human beings, created in the image of God, have enormous value and dignity; every human life is of great value in God’s eyes. Second, human beings have moral responsibility. God has written his law into the human heart; we have a God-given conscience that helps us distinguish right from wrong. We are accountable, therefore, to God for our actions. Third, human beings are created as sexual beings—male and female. Both sexes, together, are in the image of God.

When God blessed mankind he commanded: 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it' (Genesis 1:28). At the centre of God's purposes is the divine plan for one man and one woman to bond together to procreate children and raise a family. God saw that his wonderful creation – with mankind as the pinnacle – was *very* good, for the creation plan was perfect, with the sexual relationship between male and female at the centre of the plan. So sex is not something that comes from the titillating pages of a pornographic magazine, not something discovered by the sex educator, but an essential aspect of God's marvellous creation.

At the time of creation the Lord God declared the need that human beings have for companionship. The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him' (Genesis 2:18). God created woman from the rib of man, highlighting the closeness of the relationship between the sexes, and providing a symbol of the 'one flesh' union created at marriage. And God brought the woman to the man, thereby showing that it is his will that there should be a sexual relationship between man and woman. To this end God placed within human nature a strong natural attraction between the sexes, as is clear from Adam's response when he first saw the female form. In delight he sang out, 'this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh' (Genesis 2:23). Human beings are endowed with desires that make it natural to enter a sexual relationship.

God's plan for marriage

After creating woman from the rib of man, God brought her to the man and laid down the principle that is to govern the sexual relationship between men and women. 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh' (Genesis 2:24). Here we have the explanation for the universal instinct which impels a man to separate from his parents and cling to his wife. In the New Testament the Lord Jesus Christ reinforced the marriage ordinance: 'So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate' (Matthew 19:6). With these famous words Christ endorsed marriage as a divine ordinance established at creation. The essential characteristics of marriage are:

1. A man leaves his father and mother

At the heart of marriage is the idea that a man leaves the family into which he is born and forms a new family with his wife. This point is important and needs to be clearly understood; marriage creates a new family as husband and wife leave the families of their parents and together start a new family. The leaving of the parental family is a public event. It is important for society and friends to know that when a couple starts living together that they are joined to each other in marriage. Marriage is good for the stability of society, for the protection of children and for the moral well-being of the nation.

should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight' (1 Peter 3:3-4). Modesty is characterised by a quiet and gentle spirit, which demonstrates a woman's true worth. It is primarily directed towards men, and makes a clear statement of a woman's intention to preserve her sexuality for the one man who will be her husband and the father of her children. Because modesty reveals a woman's inner beauty, it is attractive to the man who loves her and chooses her to be his wife.

The great value of modesty is that it enhances the feminine attributes of woman-kind. It produces a woman of resolute character who understands the value and purpose of her sexuality. Her relationships with men are based on truth and genuine affection, not on sexual lust. She is not a sex object, but a woman with dignity and value. She understands that she has been blessed with the potential for reproduction and she does not abuse God's gift of motherhood. She understands the value of chastity and knows why sexual intercourse should be reserved for marriage. By her modest behaviour she earns the respect of men, and they desire her companionship because she is a real woman, not because she is sexually available.

2. Chivalry – treating women with honour and respect

Chivalry is the virtue that flows from the apostle Peter's instruction to husbands to treat their wives with respect 'as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life' (1 Peter 3:7). It is a male virtue that recognises the true nature of womanhood. A woman is the weaker partner for she does not have the same physical strength as a man. And more important, she has been given the gracious gift of motherhood. And wrapped up in this gift is a woman's sexual vulnerability for she is prone to pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood. Recognising this gracious gift, a real man responds by treating women with respect and honour.

So chivalry is founded on biblical truth and provides the moral framework in which a worthy man relates to women; it teaches a man to become a gentleman, committed to honour and principle. Chivalry reveals itself in a man's courteous behaviour—it is natural for a man to honour and protect all women, not only his mother, sister and wife. Like modesty, chivalry comes from the inner self and is a reflection of God's moral law.

Self-control is an essential component of chivalrous behaviour. Christian young men are to be trained by the grace of God 'to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age' (Titus 2:12). According to Proverbs, 'A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls' (Proverbs 25:28). The discipline of self-control is to be applied in all areas of life, and especially to sexual behaviour. Worldly passions should not be given free rein, but should be controlled. A chivalrous man understands that for a woman there is no such thing as casual sex, for she bears the awful responsibility of conceiving a new life and all that that involves.

of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honourable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit' (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).

Christian virtues

Christian sexual conduct is expressed in the four virtues—modesty, chivalry, chastity and fidelity. Sexual purity is the foundation on which these virtues are built. While each virtue applies to an aspect of sexual behaviour, together they form a coherent inner belief system that sets a standard for sexual conduct that gives meaning to marriage and the family.

Modesty is the virtue that recognises the rightful purpose of sex as something private, mysterious, and meant for the relationship between husband and wife. Modesty discourages lust and encourages faithful love. Chivalry is the virtue that teaches men to relate to women with honour and respect. It gives men the inner motivation to practise self-control, honesty and decency in relationships. Chastity is based on the desire for sexual purity, both before and after marriage. It welcomes the discipline of self-control and self-denial. Fidelity is based in faithfulness that rejoices in the lifelong nature of the marriage union, and so provides security for all members of the family. Modesty and chivalry are the roots from which the other virtues grow and bear the fruits of marital faithfulness and family security. Marriage and the family flourish when all four virtues are practised. And most important of all, these are the Christian virtues that guard children from danger and abuse—they provide children with God-given security, protecting them from the ravages that result from sexual immorality. In his great wisdom, God has instituted moral laws around human sexual conduct that preserve marriage, secure the family and protect children. These virtues are based in the holy, righteous character of God, and are reflected in his moral law.

1. Modesty – inner beauty, outward conduct

The apostle Paul emphasises the importance of modesty as a Christian virtue. 'I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes' (1 Timothy 2:9). A modest woman does not make an outward show of her female attributes and does not present herself in a way that is sexually provocative or that attracts undue attention. She is careful to abstain from any unbecoming or shameful conduct.

The apostle Peter explains the importance of modesty as a virtue that enhances the inner beauty of women. A wife's beauty 'should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. Instead, it

2. A man is united to his wife

At marriage a man is united to his wife. Their unity is based upon vows to live together as husband and wife and to be faithful to each other, whatever the circumstances, until 'death us do part'. Vows are made in the presence of God, for he is the divine witness to the marriage. Husband and wife are, in fact, entering into a covenant relationship that cannot be broken, except by death, even should one partner prove unfaithful. In their hearts husband and wife know that the bond created by marriage is for life. The marriage union provides the fullest expression of mutual loving companionship that human beings can experience in this world.

3. No longer two, but one flesh

Jesus emphasised the one flesh union created at marriage with the words: 'So they are no longer two, but one.' Jesus is saying that at the most important level husband and wife are no longer two individuals, but 'one flesh'. The apostle Paul teaches that a husband ought to love his wife as his own body. 'He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it' (Ephesians 5:28-29). Paul is emphasising the closeness of the bond between husband and wife—they become one kindred, a new family. Just as blood relations are flesh and blood, so marriage creates a similar kinship relation between man and wife.

By joining together in sexual intercourse, husband and wife have the potential to create a new life, which is the natural fruit of their marriage union. Husband and wife are joint heirs of the gift of life (1 Peter 3:7). They accept with joy the children that result, for they are the natural, legitimate products of their union – clear evidence that they are truly 'one flesh'. The children born into the family illustrate the concept of 'one flesh'. Both parents contribute equally to the genetic make-up of their children, and the likeness to their parents bears witness to this fact.

So Jesus made a profound statement when he said they are one. As the apostle Paul says, 'by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive' (Romans 7:2). Those who marry must understand that they have entered into a lifelong union; there is no turning back, no second chance—the marriage vow is 'till death us do part'. This is why it is so important for husband and wife to be faithful to each other. The fundamental principle is that the 'one flesh' marriage bond is indissoluble. We all know that family members, such as children and their grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins, are related to each other and are related for life; they remain each other's flesh and blood no matter what.

4. What God has joined let man not separate

Having stressed the importance of the marriage ordinance, Jesus concludes with the words, 'Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate' (Matthew 19:6).

He contrasts the divine action of joining together husband and wife with the human inclination to separate as a matter of convenience. According to Jesus it is God who joins husband and wife in marriage. This means that God is the author of the new family created by marriage. And so we see a profound biblical truth—families are created by God, and not by man. Therefore a married couple has a moral responsibility before God to maintain the family formed at their marriage.

The maternal instinct

Because womankind is created in the image of God, women have an inborn understanding of the maternal role. The first woman was named Eve, 'because she would become the mother of all the living' (Genesis 3:20). God created women in such a way that it is natural to desire marriage and children. Most women understand that children should be born into a family created by marriage. God has placed within the conscience of womankind a natural inhibition to restrain them from abusing the gift of motherhood. Their conscience warns that sex outside marriage is wrong, and so they fear the consequences of an unintended pregnancy. For this reason most women do not relish casual sex. Few want their child to be conceived as a result of a casual relationship and suffer the wretchedness of being born outside wedlock. Few women want a child to grow up without knowing his father; this is why most instinctively want to wait until marriage before they engage in a sexual relationship.

Mankind rebels against God's moral law

The sexual nature of mankind needs to be understood within the context of the moral universe created by God. The Bible explains that the Lord God presented the first man and woman with a moral test. In the Garden of Eden the Lord God provided an abundance of fruit trees from which Adam and Eve could eat. But one tree he set apart from which they should not eat. God spoke to Adam: 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die' (Genesis 2:16). With this command God instituted a moral universe. Adam and Eve, as the representatives of mankind, were morally accountable to God—they had a free will and could choose whether or not to obey God's word. It was right to accept the word of their Creator and obey his commands. To eat the forbidden fruit was to disobey God. And God warned of the consequences of disobedience—'when you eat of it you will surely die'.

The Bible explains that the serpent, the devil, tempted Eve with a subtle question: 'Did God really say?' The devil tempted Eve by casting doubt on the word of God. And when Eve 'saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it' (Genesis 3:6). The cunning serpent had challenged God's command, suggesting that Eve would benefit, for by eating she would

become like God. Eve, having listened to both sides, having seen that the fruit was good, pleasing and desirable, made an 'informed' decision to go her own way and eat the forbidden fruit, ignoring the moral consequences of her actions. In making her 'informed' decision she rejected the command of God. This act of disobedience was the first sin. It struck a blow at truth, for it challenged God's declaration 'you will surely die'. It also struck a blow at God's moral law, for the human race had chosen to go its own way, rejecting God's word. And so sin entered into the human heart when Adam and Eve rebelled—mankind stood guilty before God.

The lust of the flesh

Because the human heart is sinful all mankind struggles against the 'lusts of the flesh which war against the soul' (1 Peter 2:11). The Bible warns that those who reject the truth of God are susceptible to sexual impurity (Romans 1:24). The apostle Paul declares that 'we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath' (Ephesians 2:3). The acts of the sinful nature are obvious, and top of the list are sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery (Galatians 5:19). The sexual relationship between men and women has been corrupted and human nature is liable to lustful cravings and impure sexual desires. Yielding to these desires leads to sexual immorality.

Because of the lusts of the flesh, young men and women should do everything they can to avoid sexual temptation. One of the problems with sex education is that it encourages impure thoughts, inflames sexual desires and leads to sexual temptation. It is essential to follow the narrow way Jesus spoke about in the Sermon on the Mount.

Christian teaching on sexual purity

The Bible teaches that sexual purity provides a solid foundation for marriage. 'Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral' (Hebrews 13:4). Sexual purity is an attitude of mind and desire of the heart that comes from an understanding of God's holy character and is manifest in our thoughts, speech and the way we behave. Impurity, sexual immorality, fornication and adultery are the enemies of marriage, and God's plan for marriage cannot flourish if sexual immorality is widespread and accepted as the norm.

The concept of chastity flows from the holiness that is central to the character of God. Young women are to be trained 'to be discreet, chaste' (Titus 2:5). The word 'chaste', which is related to the word holy, means clean, modest, pure, undefiled, without blemish. All immorality, impurity and uncontrolled passion are out of place for Christians. 'But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity' (Ephesians 5:3). 'Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires...' (Colossians 3:5). 'It is God's will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each